

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel ~~[[comprising]]~~ consisting of C: 0.01 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 1.5%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 0.1 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, ~~[[C]]~~ Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (a)$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC and the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of the prior austenite is not more than 0.5 volume %.

2. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel ~~[[comprising]]~~ consisting of C: 0.01 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 1.5%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 0.1 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05% ~~[[and]]~~, N: not more than 0.1%, ~~[[C]]~~ Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (b)$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC and the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of the prior austenite is not more than 0.5 volume %.

3. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel ~~[[comprising]]~~ consisting of C: 0.01 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 1.5%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 0.1 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05% ~~[[and]]~~, N: not more than 0.1%, ~~[[C]]~~ Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and further comprising one or more elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (a)$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC and the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of the prior austenite is not more than 0.5 volume %.

4. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel ~~[[comprising]]~~ consisting of C: 0.01 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 1.5%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 0.1 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05% ~~[[and]]~~, N: not more than 0.1%, ~~[[C]]~~ Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and further comprising one or more elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad (b)$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC and the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of the prior austenite is not more than 0.5 volume %.

5. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel according to Claim 1, wherein said steel further ~~[[comprises]]~~ consists of one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %.

6. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel according to Claim 2, wherein said steel further ~~[[comprises]]~~ consists of one or more of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %.

7. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel according to Claim 3, wherein said steel further ~~[[comprises]]~~ consists of one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %.

8. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel according to Claim 4, wherein said steel further [[comprises]] consists of one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %.

9. (previously presented) The martensitic stainless steel of claim 1, wherein Mo is present.

10. (previously presented) The martensitic stainless steel of claim 2, wherein Mo is present.

11. (previously presented) The martensitic stainless steel of claim 4, wherein Mo is present.

12. (previously presented) The martensitic stainless steel of claim 4, wherein Mo is present.